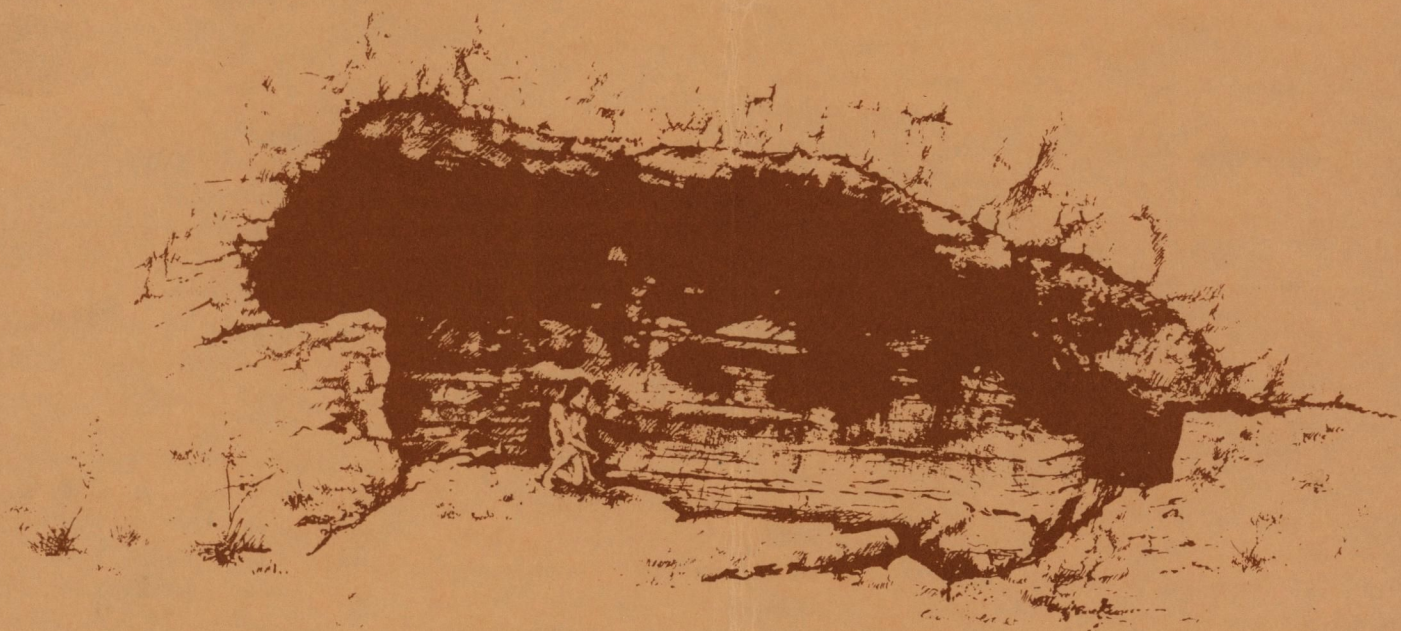


**RECOGNITION
OF
MARMES ROCKSHELTER
AS A
REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

**DEDICATION 3:30 P.M. JUNE 3, 1967
LOWER PALOUSE RIVER NEAR LYONS FERRY, WASHINGTON**



**Site Owner - U. S. GOVERNMENT
Administered by U. S. Army, Corps of Engineers**

Former Owners - Mr. and Mrs. Roland J. Marmes

**Archeological Salvage - Laboratory of Anthropology
Washington State University
By Contract with National Park Service**

MARMES ROCKSHELTER DEDICATION

Sponsored by Spalding Museum Foundation, Inc.

GREETING

Theodore H. Little, Nez Perce Tribal Attorney, President, Spalding Museum Foundation, Inc.

INVOCATION

Reverend Father Michael O'Malley, representing Catholic Nez Perce Indian Mission

NEZ PERCE INDIAN DANCE

Master Randall Vernon Ellenwood

ARCHEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MARMES ROCKSHELTER

Dr. Richard D. Daugherty, Professor of Anthropology, Washington State University

GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Mr. Roald Fryxell, Instructor in Anthropology (Geochronology), Washington State University

NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MARMES ROCKSHELTER

Dr. John Corbett, Chief Archeologist, National Park Service

PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATE

Mr. Robert Burns, Superintendent, Nez Perce National Historical Park

ACCEPTANCE OF CERTIFICATE

Major Ronald A. Walton, Deputy District Engineer, Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District

REMARKS

Mr. Richard A. Halfmoon, Chairman, Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee

ADDRESS

Senator Henry M. Jackson, United States Senator, State of Washington

BENEDICTION

Reverend E. Paul Hovey, Vice-President, Spalding Museum Foundation, Inc.

REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

The Congress in 1935 declared a national policy to preserve, for public use, historic sites, buildings, and objects of national significance. In 1960, the Registry of National Historic Landmarks was established by the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service, extending national recognition to historic and archeologic sites possessing exceptional significance. The Registry identifies important segments of our American heritage and brings them to the attention of the American people. It is under this program that Marmes Rockshelter is recognized.



Students at work during excavations in Marmes Rockshelter.

MARMES ROCKSHELTER

In the summers of 1962, 1963, and 1964, archeological excavations were carried out in Marmes Rockshelter by members of the staff and students from Washington State University. This research program was directed by Dr. Richard D. Daugherty. Mr. Roald Fryxell studied the geology of the site, and Mr. Carl Gustafson made the identifications of the faunal remains.

The Marmes Rockshelter has produced the earliest burials in the Pacific Northwest, and some of the earliest burials so far encountered in the western hemisphere. It is without question the most outstanding site yet discovered in the Northwest.

(continued on back cover)

From a geological point of view, no other rockshelter or cave site on the Columbia Plateau illustrates so clearly the changes in sedimentation produced by changing climatic conditions, nor does any other site offer better opportunity for dating and correlating the stratigraphic sequence with the record of human prehistory. Of particular interest from an archeological point of view are the long sequence of human occupation and the remarkable record of human burials in an unusually clear geologic context. In all, 17 burials were recovered.

Considerably below the surface of the shelter was a layer of light volcanic ash (pumicite), deposited by the eruption of Mt. Mazama (Crater Lake, Oregon), 6,500 years ago. Beneath the pumicite, four human skeletons were found. These are the first which have been reported from such an early culture period.

Two of the skeletons are those of adults. They were not buried; instead, it appears that they died in the cave and that their remains were not covered until the cave floor was blanketed by the Mazama pumicite. These skeletons rested on a shell midden (refuse layer) which existed prior to the volcanic deposit. A third skeleton, that of an infant which had been buried, came from just below the midden and thus predates it. Placed with it were five crudely flaked basalt blades. The fourth skeleton, that of an adult, was found almost four feet below the infant burial. Its age has been fixed at some time prior to 7,550 years ago by a radiocarbon dating.

Scattered throughout the stratum just beneath the pumicite were numerous beads made from small snail shells. Although common in archeological sites elsewhere in the area, their occurrence in this stratigraphic position was surprising. The nearest source for these shells is the Pacific Coast; thus, contact and trade with inhabitants of the coastal area had been established before the Mazama eruption, a time far earlier than had been previously recognized. Probably such exchange continued without significant break to late prehistoric times.

In the midden beneath the pumicite layer were great amounts of both shell and fractured animal bone; in most cases, these were segregated as distinct layers alternating with each other, thus suggesting the possibility of a seasonal difference in food source. Local concentrations of ash from fires record heavy use of the shelter and, at times of occupation, the floor must literally have been paved with bone or shell fragments. Other concentrations of shell and bone midden were found higher in the stratigraphic sequence.

In addition to the long and complete archeological sequence and exceptionally clear geological picture represented, the four burials from the early cultural period will make it a site that will be repeatedly referred to and discussed.

In 1968, when the Lower Monumental Lock and Dam is complete, the reservoir will rise to an elevation just above the original ground line before excavation. The mouth of the shelter will always remain visible. The site will be accessible by boat or by foot trail and will be included in an interpretive program of the history and geology of the lower Palouse River being planned in conjunction with Lyons Ferry Park, located at the confluence of the Palouse and Snake Rivers.